GUIDE TO THE MW11 SHLUH FILE

[This file is concerned with the Shluh (Chleuch) who are a Berber nation of the Masmuda or Shluh division inhabiting the Grand Atlas and Anti-Atlas Mountains, the plain of the Sous River Valley between them, and the adjoining coastal region in Morocco. The Shluh are divided into a very large number of small tribes, among them being the Seksawa (Sekasoua), who are the focal group of the file. The Shluh originally extended throughout the coastal plain now occupied by the Arabized West Moroccans, with Islam probably being accepted prior to 1000 A. D. The Shluh country was pacified by the French in 1933. The economy is primarily agricultural, with barley and wheat being the staple crops. The Shluh keep considerable numbers of cattle, sheep, and goats. They are almost completely sedentary, occupying permanent settlements. The mountain Shluh are strongly egalitarian, but in the regions which have come under the control of the Sultan of Morocco, there are marked class differences, from feudal aristocracy to slaves. The most crucial political unit is the district or canton (taqbilt), which is a petty state of perhaps a dozen communities on the average which acts as a unit in time of war. The Seksawa number about 12,000 in 80 settlements in 11 taqbilt.

There are four sources in the Shluh file, three of them being translations from the French, and one (4: Hoffman) being in English. 1: Berque and 2: Montagne are the major sources. 1: Berque is a lengthy monograph concentrating on the Seksawa but bringing in comparisons from other groups in Morocco and North Africa. Its focus is on the interrelationships between law and religion, but also includes a good deal of information on geography and environment.

2: Montagne deals with the history and political evolution of the Shluh, dealing in turn with the Sous region, with the political organization of the Berber republics, and with the rise to personal power of individual chiefs. 3: Dupas is a short description of the community storehouses in use among the Shluh. 4: Hoffman contains general information on the structure of traditional society, ecology, and economy. The Shluh file is adequate as it stands for some comparative purposes, mainly in the sociopolitical area. However, it is deficient in a number of respects, particularly in regard to life cycle and seasonal activity materials. In addition, one of the principal sources (1: Berque) is very difficult to understand because of the manner in which it was written. The researcher should be aware of the time focus of the materials he is using as well as of the political and geographical foci when he is making comparisons. A number of marking decisions have been made for the file. The hamlet or village (tadchert) has been marked for Category 621, the subfraction (3-4 villages together) for 632, the fraction (ca. 10 villages) for 634, the tribe (union of 3-10 fractions) for 619, the confederation (20-30 tribes) for 631. The lef (f), a moiety-like aggregation of districts, has been marked for Category 616; soff (alliances of families) for 571; diwan or inflas (district councils) for 634; khoms (a name for a tribal division) for 619; caids (great chiefs) for 631; canton (taqbilt) for 634; moqaddem (president of a council) for 622, 623, or 634; jemaa (a democratic assembly) for 619, 623, 634; and agadirs, casbahs, and tighremt (fortified buildings of different types) for 712 as well as functional categories. The file was processed between 1969 and 1975.]